

THE ADVISOR

A joint publication of the In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee and the Orange County In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Public Authority



MISSION: Working hand in hand with the community to serve IHSS Consumers so they may remain safe and independent in their own home.

Orange County IHSS Public Authority



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Be Your Own Advocate

by Don Bondi

In times of a budget crisis you need to take action. The In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Advisory Committee will help you to be your own best advocate.

I know many people feel that nobody is listening, so why take the time to write or e-mail? If you put a face on the proposed cuts and tell your story of how these cuts will affect you and your family, you change the issue from dollars saved to people who could have their lives destroyed because of cost going up and/or health care denied. It is your job to educate your legislators and make them understand that on average the IHSS consumer receives \$10,800 a year (\$900 a month) but if you institutionalize that same person the cost to government would be \$60,000 a year (\$5,000 a month).

First - Find out who your legislators are. You can find them in the phone book under "Government offices," or on-line under "California State Senate and Assembly" and at your local library.

Second - Write, e-mail or fax to the legislator that can help you with your concern. For budget cuts contact your state Senator, Assemblyman, Budget Committees and Governor. In each office there is a staff member that handles "social services issues." Write to that staffer, get to know him/her and your message will have a better chance of being brought to the attention of the legislator.

Third - Be sure to get your facts straight. Tell the legislator your story, how you and your family will be affected by the proposed cuts. When you put a real face on the budget cuts you can change the focus from just dollars saved to how real people's lives will be impacted in a very negative way.

Fourth - Make your letter no more than one page long. Make it concise and keep it to one issue at a time.

Don't leave it up to someone else to fight for you - do it yourself. Be persistent, keep writing, e-mailing and faxing. Encourage your family and friends to do the same. Join forces with a disability rights organizations like the Dayle McIntosh Center, the Council on Aging and others. These organizations can even help you craft your letter. Legislators count the number of responses they receive on an issue so keep the letters coming. Be the one that makes the difference!

Emergency Preparedness ~ Are You Ready?

by Shirley Adams

Do you have an emergency preparedness kit? To be ready, you should add the following information to your kit in a waterproof plastic bag.

1. Medications
2. Medical supplies
3. Allergies
4. Your diagnosis or special medical conditions
5. Phone numbers of family/friends/doctor
6. Local emergency phone numbers
7. E-mail addresses of family/friends
8. Medical equipment
9. Out of state contact
10. Meeting place



Other good information to add to this list is the phone number to your local police department and fire department. Plan ahead, be prepared.

Medical Insurance Marketing Rules for 2009

by Clifford Roth



Attention people with Medicare - The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued new rules on Monday, September 15, 2008 that will more strictly govern the marketing of Medicare Advantage and Medicare Prescription Drug Plans. These rules are designed to protect persons with Medicare from being sold insurance products that are unwanted or unsuitable for the person's needs.

The rules will prohibit unsolicited sales pitches, including telemarketing and door-to-door sales; meals at sales presentations; promoting other products not related to health care at sales presentations; conducting sales presentations at physicians' offices or other locations where health care services are provided; and attempting to sell plans at events billed as educational. There are additional rules that regulate the insurance industry and protect Medicare beneficiaries. These rules will go into effect on October 1, 2008, the day that marketing of the 2009 plans may begin.

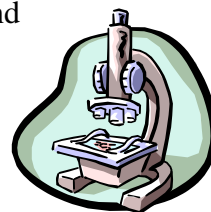
Protect yourself from bad insurance practices. Don't sign anything unless you are sure about what you are getting. Ask to have a friend or family member **review the documents before you sign**. **Do not feel pressured to sign anything**. A good insurance agent will understand that you need time to think about your options; **because you do have options**.

If you have any questions or experienced anyone violating those rules, please contact Health Insurance Counseling and Advocacy Program (HICAP). HICAP is an unbiased Medicare counseling service, their phone numbers are: 714-560-0424 or 800-434-0222.

Stem Cell

by Shirley Adams

My daughter, Tiffany Adams, and myself, Shirley Adams, are members of the Orange County IHSS Advisory Board and serve as the Southern Regional Co-Vice Presidents for California In-Home Supportive Services Consumer Alliance (CICA). On April 12-13, 2008, we had the pleasure of attending the State of Stem Cell Advocacy 2008 Conference in San Francisco.



We met Robert Klein, who is the author of Proposition 71. Proposition 71 is the law that moved stem cell into a reality. I also had the opportunity to speak with Alan Trounson, Ph.D., President of CIRM [California Institute of Regenerative Medicine]. Dr. Trounson is from Australia and is known as "The Pioneer of Invitro Fertilization." Also present was Brock Reeves, Christopher Reeves brother, who is the Executive Director of the Harvard Stem Cell Institute and Don Reed, who is the sponsor for the California Roman Reed Spinal Cord Injury Research Act [1999]. These members of America for Cures Foundation treated us with the utmost hospitality. Tiffany and I were so fascinated listening to all the doctors and researchers explain the processes to make these cells cure so many different types of illnesses. We learned how the researchers 'differentiate' the cells in a 'Petri' dish. There are three different types of stem cells; adult, fetal, and embryonic. There are also three different type of components in these cells; ectoderm, mesoderm and endoderm. Depending on your need, one of these three can become the appropriate type of cell to correct your problem.

Being able to converse with all of these knowledgeable people and ask direct questions relating to Tiffany's disability (Cerebral Palsy) was unique. We are hopeful for her and others with disabilities. We believe that stem cell is going to help so many people. To stay informed about the current status of this research, check out stemcellbattles.com.

Acronyms

APS –Adult Protective Services

800- 451-5155

24 hr. Hotline to report suspected Adult/Elder abuse or neglect.

COA – Council on Aging

714 – 479-0107

Promotes adult empowerment, abuse prevention, and advocacy for the rights and dignity of those experiencing health and aging challenges.

IHSS - In-Home Supportive Services

714 –825-3000

In-home care assistance for low-income, aged, blind or disabled persons who meet eligibility criteria.

IHSS AC – In-Home Supportive Services Advisory Committee

714-825-3355 (voicemail box for messages only)

Provides ongoing advice and recommendations to the County of Orange Board of Supervisors, Social Services Agency (SSA) and the Public Authority regarding the delivery of IHSS services.

MSSP – Multipurpose Senior Services Program

714- 246-8500 or 714-825-3000

Provides social and health case management to Medi-Cal recipients that are 65 years and older.

OOA – Office on Aging

800-510-2020

Provides services to older adults, including advocacy, information and resources.

PA – Orange County In-Home Supportive Services Public Authority

714-435-4544

Provides services to IHSS Consumers that includes a homecare Provider Registry, training, information and referrals.

Visit the PA website at www.ocgov.com/publicauth

SSA – Social Services Agency

714-541-7700 (General Information)

Responsible for planning, implementing and operating many of the social services programs provided by the County of Orange.

SSA – Social Security Administration

714-502-9249

Information and application for benefits including Social Security retirement, survivor and burial; Supplemental

Security Income (SSI) and Medicare. Also issuance of Social Security cards.

IHSS Public Authority Registry Services

by Luz Napoles Loreto

Does your Provider or family caregiver who is paid through IHSS need respite (temporary relief from their duties), going on vacation or sick? You may be thinking, “Who is going to take care of me?” The Orange County IHSS Public Authority (PA) may be able to help. The PA has a Registry of homecare Providers who work specifically for IHSS Consumers. These Providers have passed the PA’s application process including Orientation, interview, reference check, and a criminal background check via Live Scan fingerprinting.

Here’s how the PA Registry works:

1. If you need a list of Providers and have not received PA services before, ask your IHSS Social Worker to refer you to the PA Registry.
2. After receiving the referral, a Registry/Training Specialist (RTS) who serves your city will call you for an Intake. During the Intake process, the RTS will ask you questions to determine your specific needs.
3. A list of available Providers who match your needs is generated from the Registry database and mailed to you. It will be you, the IHSS recipient, who is responsible for interviewing, hiring, and ultimately firing the Provider.
4. The Provider is paid \$8.90 an hour and the number of hours your Provider works is based on your eligible IHSS hours as assessed your IHSS Social Worker.

If you foresee your Provider needing time off, it is best to contact the PA immediately. While the PA strives to provide you with immediate assistance, finding a Provider that is suitable for you may take longer than you expected. Give yourself time to interview and hire a Provider that is a good match for you. For more information, call the PA at 714-435-4544.

Website: www.ocgov.com/publicauth

When Calling a Government Agency *by Don Bondi*

When you need to call a government agency, below are some steps you can take to help you get the information you need and make the call a successful one.

1. Make a list of all the questions you have before you call so you won't forget what you need to ask.
2. Have all correspondence you have sent or received from the agency you are calling ready before you start your phone call.
3. Write down the date, name, phone number and title of anyone you speak to and a brief description of the conversation.
4. If you are requested to send in any information, make copies of everything for your own files (date them with the date sent) so if there is a problem you will still have the information to send again if necessary.
5. If you are asked to call back or to call someone else in the agency, please follow up. If you are asked to send in information, do so in a timely manner. If you don't hear back from the agency after a few days, call them again.
6. If you are sent a form requesting further information, fill out all sections that pertain to your issue and send it back in a timely manner.

In addition, keep a file for each government agency that you receive benefits from, i.e. IHSS, SSI, PA, Medi-Cal, Medicare or vendors that you receive medical supplies from such as equipment, wheelchairs, etc. This way you will have all your information separated for easy access when you need it and proof of what you have sent in and when.

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